

1. (Previously Amended) In an electric guitar of the type that is strung with guitar strings that terminate with end caps, wherein the guitar has a body that defines a plurality of cylindrical string apertures that are sized to enable the guitar strings, but not the end caps, to pass therethrough, a device for preventing wear on each guitar string as it passes into one of the cylindrical string, said device, comprising:

a tubular sleeve that defines a central conduit, said tubular sleeve including:

a neck section with an external diameter that enables said neck section to pass into any of the cylindrical string apertures, and

a head section that is sized to be too large to pass through the string aperture,

wherein said central conduit is sized to enable a guitar string to pass therethrough,

whereby said tubular sleeve is placed in one of said cylindrical string apertures and the guitar string is strung through said central conduit of said tubular sleeve.

2.(Previously Amended) The device according to Claim 1, wherein said central conduit expands within said head section, thereby creating a curved interior surface.

3.(Original) The device according to Claim 1, wherein said tubular sleeve is comprised of a synthetic material.

4.(Previously Amended) The device according to Claim 3, wherein said synthetic material is selected from a group consisting of Teflon, Kevlar and Surlyn.

5. (Original) The device according to Claim 1, wherein said tubular sleeve is comprised of a soft metal selected from a group consisting of brass, bronze, tin alloys, aluminum, and aluminum alloys.

6. (Previously Amended) In a guitar of the type having a body with a front surface and a back surface, wherein a plurality of string apertures extend through the guitar between the front surface and the back surface, wherein the guitar is strung by passing guitar strings with end caps through the string apertures, a method of reducing wear and stress on guitar strings as they pass through the string apertures, said method comprising the steps of:

placing tubular sleeves within each of the string apertures in the electric guitar;

advancing the guitar strings through the tubular sleeves while stringing the guitar, wherein each of the guitar strings is biased against a tubular sleeve when the guitar is strung.

7. (Previously Amended) The method according to Claim 6, wherein each tubular sleeve has a neck section that fits within a string aperture of the electric guitar, and a head section that is too large to pass through the string aperture.

8. (Original) The method according to Claim 7, wherein said tubular sleeve defines a conduit and said conduit expands within said head section, thereby creating a curved interior surface against which the guitar string bends when the guitar is strung.

9. (Original) The method according to Claim 6, wherein said tubular sleeve is comprised of a synthetic material.

10. (Previously Amended) The method according to Claim 9, wherein said synthetic

material is selected from a group consisting of Teflon, Kevlar and Surlyn.

11. (Original) The method according to Claim 6, wherein said tubular sleeve is comprised of a soft metal selected from a group consisting of brass, bronze, tin alloys, aluminum, and aluminum alloys.

β 12. (Previously Amended) A guitar, comprising:

- a body having a front surface and a rear surface, wherein said body defines a plurality of string apertures that extend unobstructed between said front surface and said back surface;
- a neck extending from said body;
- tuning mechanisms supported by said neck;
- replaceable tubular sleeves lining said string apertures;
- strings extending through said tubular sleeves in said string apertures to said tuning mechanisms, wherein said tuning mechanisms cause said strings to bend about and contact said tubular sleeves.

13. (Original) The guitar according to Claim 12, wherein each of said tubular sleeves has a neck section sized to fit within one of said string apertures and a head section that is sized to be too large to pass through that string aperture.

14. (Original) The guitar according to Claim 13, wherein each of said tubular sleeves defines a conduit through which one of the guitar strings pass, wherein each said conduit expands within said head section, thereby creating a curved interior surface against which the guitar string

is biased by one of said tuning mechanisms.

15. (Original) The guitar according to Claim 12, wherein each of said tubular sleeves is comprised of a synthetic material.

16. (Previously Amended) The device according to Claim 12, wherein said synthetic material is selected from a group consisting of Teflon, Kevlar and Surlyn.

17. (Original) The device according to Claim 12, wherein each of said tubular sleeves is comprised of a material that is softer than that of said guitar strings.

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